

TRANSMITTAL SLIP	DATE 14 Feb 83
TO: NIO/USSR	

TRANSMITTAL SLIP	DATE 14 Feb 83
TO: NIO/SP	

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 14 Feb 83
TO: <input type="text"/> C/ACIS		
ROOM NO. 6F20	BUILDING Hqs.	
REMARKS:		
FYI		
FROM: Harry Rowen, C/NIC		
ROOM NO. 7E52	BUILDING Hqs.	
FROM: Harry Rowen, C/NIC		
ROOM NO. 7E52	BUILDING Hqs.	

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ment (1974)

THE INSIDE STORY OF SALT II

Strobe Talbott

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Two Steps Forward. One Step Back

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ate concealment measure "whenever" and "whenever" was carefully chosen to indeed sometimes impede. Had the key codes," the Soviets might have found it and then argue that in fact encryption was always permitted. For that reason the always saying "when," not "if," in discussing concealment measure. Without a limit, said Warnke to Semyonov sternly, the verified; moreover, it could not—indeed, prepared to be criticized," said the much ready announced his intention to return am not prepared to be ridiculed." In the ar meeting, Semyonov finally conceded relevant to the verification of SALT, its ed by SALT.

happened in Moscow a few days later another round of talks with Gromyko. his own bosses. When Vance referred to d Earle had had with Semyonov a few onov suddenly appeared very worried his notes, looking for a memorandum American version of what he had said. Soviet government still maintained that was irrelevant to the provisions of SALT. nke that on this question Semyonov on." Over lunch, Warnke sat next to e up again. "You can encrypt as long as ke, "but you can't carve out an exemp- Gromyko replied in English: "On this ll." Warnke told the foreign minister, g like a stone wall, because this is an the agreement is to be verified and

ed that the Soviet policy-makers would m negotiator. When the Kremlin an- t Semyonov was being transferred from ator to that of ambassador to West Ger- tion in Washington that he was being tructions on the encryption issue. That

speculation seemed ill founded. The ambassadorship to the Federal Republic is an important and prestigious assignment in the Soviet foreign service. The embassy in Bonn is hardly a diplomatic exile. Semyonov had been chief SALT negotiator since the dawn of the negotiations in 1969. He had spent much of his career in Germany and prided himself on his knowledge of German culture. He would quote Goethe at any excuse. His transfer was more likely a reward than a punishment, and it was probably occasioned by the fact that his American opposite number, Warnke, was also about to step down. Semyonov's successor was Victor Karpov, the Foreign Ministry representative on the delegation, and Warnke's replacement as chief negotiator was Ralph Earle.

The apparent confusion of signals—all too common on the American side but virtually unprecedented on the Soviet side—could be explained as a bargaining tactic, or so the American negotiators hoped. Perhaps the Kremlin had, as Semyonov indicated, decided to accept a common understanding that prohibited encryption whenever it impeded verification, but Gromyko and Kornienko were holding out on formal acceptance until the U.S. conceded on the issue of cruise missile definition; the Soviets would give up on an exemption for encryption if and when the Americans gave up on an exemption for conventionally armed cruise missiles. Both were issues of verification and therefore tied together in Gromyko's proverbial ball of twine.

In the weeks after Vance's return from Moscow, the Carter administration underwent an agonizing reappraisal over whether to try, through further negotiation and compromise, to untie the knot or whether, through an outright American concession, to cut the string. Cyrus Vance was more convinced than ever that the U.S. position on cruise missile definition not only was dubious on its merits, but was contributing to Soviet inflexibility on the other outstanding issues, particularly encryption. Paul Warnke fully agreed with Vance—but Warnke was now out of the government, although he was still serving as a consultant to the administration on SALT. Vance, Warnke, Earle, Gelb and most other high officials of the Arms Control Agency and the State Department felt that Carter and Harold Brown should never have let Henry Jackson and Sam Nunn persuade them of the political importance of the issue to the European allies. "Cruise missile definition was important to NATO only insofar as we made it seem important by making such a big deal out of it in the negotiations," said an American diplomat who was instructed to reassure the West Euro-

peans that the U.S. would stand firm in protecting conventionally armed cruise missiles. "A fool is somebody who formulates a problem in such a way that he can't solve it except by backing down," said a State Department official. "And it was in just that sense that our definition of cruise missiles was foolish."

Zbigniew Brzezinski was having some second thoughts—indeed, third thoughts—about his own position on the issue. Originally, in 1977, he had worried about the difficulty of verifying a distinction between conventional and nuclear warheads on cruise missiles. Then he had come around to the Pentagon view that the verification of such a distinction was a Soviet problem, not an American one, because of the U.S. superiority in cruise missile technology. Having changed his mind once, he was now coming full circle to his original position: what if the Soviets developed long-range ALCMs more quickly than the intelligence community expected and deployed them on the Backfire bomber, claiming they were conventionally armed? Under the American definition, since the Backfire was to be treated in SALT as an aircraft other than a heavy bomber, Backfires armed with long-range conventional ALCMs could "run free" after the expiration of the protocol—and the U.S. would have little confidence that the ALCMs aboard those Backfires were really conventional. Walter Mondale was worried about the same thing. "Someday the Soviets will have a cruise missile and paint it with a big 'C' and load it on a Backfire," said the Vice-President, "and then where will we be? It's a distinction that can't be verified and therefore shouldn't be in the treaty."

In late November, Brzezinski and Mondale went to the President separately and argued that a concession would not only help move the negotiations along—it was also prudent, given the danger of the Soviets' using the U.S. provision to cheat. Harold Brown, the principal sponsor of the exemption for conventional ALCMs, reluctantly came around to the same conclusion. He, Brzezinski and Mondale consulted with Sam Nunn, who said he still felt it was important to protect all conventional cruise missiles from being constrained by SALT, but that his primary concern was with ground-launched and sea-launched cruise missiles. The Joint Chiefs made much the same point in a meeting with Carter. The Chiefs said they did not care so much about an agreed statement on conventional ALCMs per se as they did about the principle that SALT should not limit conventional weapons: they wanted assurances that the blanket prohibition contained in the protocol would not be treated as a precedent to be extended after the

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and firm in protecting conventionally armed somebody who formulates a problem and solve it except by backing down," said a man. "It was in just that sense that our definition was."

Having some second thoughts—indeed, a change of position on the issue. Originally, in the face of the difficulty of verifying a distinction between warheads on cruise missiles. Then the Pentagon view that the verification of such a distinction was not an American one, because of the difficulty of verifying such technology. Having changed his position, he returned to his original position: what would be the definition of ALCMs more quickly than the Backfire and deployed them on the Backfire? Under the American definition, ALCMs would be treated in SALT as an extension of the Backfire, Backfires armed with long-range missiles. After the expiration of the protocol, the confidence that the ALCMs would be conventional. Walter Mondale was asked, "Would the Soviets will have a cruise missile and load it on a Backfire," said the man. "Will we be? It's a distinction that shouldn't be in the treaty."

Walter Mondale went to the President and said that it would not only help move the treaty forward, given the danger of the Soviet Union. Harold Brown, the principal negotiator of ALCMs, reluctantly came to the conclusion that it was important to protect all ALCMs, but that ALCMs launched and sea-launched were much the same point in a meeting. He did not care so much about ALCMs per se as they did about the distinction between conventional weapons; they would be contained in the protocol and not to be extended after the

expiration of the protocol. Carter responded, "That's not going to happen as long as I'm President." Since the press was full of speculation that Carter would be a one-term President—and since the protocol would not expire until well after the next presidential election—Carter's promise did not fully allay the Chiefs' misgivings, but it was the best he could offer. At a White House meeting at the end of November, Carter told Mondale, Vance, Brown, Brzezinski and Hamilton Jordan that he had decided once and for all to concede on the issue of cruise missile definition. He said he realized that in some respects he was damned if he did and damned if he didn't; if he stuck with the definition, he would be criticized on the grounds that it was not verifiable, and if he abandoned it, he would be criticized for "caving in" to the Soviets in their dogged effort to prevent the U.S. from reaping the benefits of a program in which it had a genuine and significant technological advantage. Carter said he would rather live with the latter criticism; the principle of verifiability was more important to defend than the appearance of hanging tough, and he now saw more merit in the argument that the cruise missile definition as originally proposed by the U.S. was unverifiable.

Shortly afterward, Vance met with Dobrynin and told him that the U.S. was prepared to withdraw its proposed exemption for conventionally armed cruise missiles on aircraft other than heavy bombers. The secretary of state made clear in that meeting, and in a series of follow-up meetings, that the administration hoped the Kremlin would reciprocate with some concessions of its own—particularly on a common understanding prohibiting the encryption of telemetry when it impeded verification, but also on a fractionation freeze for existing ICBMs and on the average number of ALCMs allowed aboard heavy bombers. Without committing his government to an explicit set of compromises, Dobrynin indicated that the next Vance-Gromyko meeting—in Geneva just before Christmas—should be productive and might permit the two sides to announce a date for a summit meeting at which Carter and Brezhnev could sign the agreement. Officials in Washington and Moscow began to make tentative plans for a summit in mid January.